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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 003214

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: SULAWESI -- RADICALISM ON THE WANE WITH POLICE
PLAYING ROLE

REF: A. JAKARTA 3143

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 2597

[1](#)C. JAKARTA 1585

[1](#)D. SURABAYA 74

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b,d).

[1](#)1. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate Surabaya.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: During a recent trip to Sulawesi Island, poloff met with various GOI officials, including from the police. There was widespread agreement that radicalism in Sulawesi had been largely contained, while tensions between Muslims and Christians had dissipated to a significant extent. Effective police work has played a key role, with community policing helping keep a lid on problems. Authorities expressed confidence that they had largely closed potential terrorist transit routes. For now, government strategies seem to be working in the region, with the policies in play helping to create a more livable environment in previously tense areas. END SUMMARY.

RADICALISM ON THE WANE

[1](#)3. (C) Poloff visited Sulawesi Island, November 5-8. In the southern city of Makassar, poloff met with the Deputy Provincial Police Chief, Brigadier General Surya Iskandar. In comments echoed elsewhere, Iskandar told poloff he was optimistic about ongoing efforts to marginalize religious extremism throughout Sulawesi and noted that southern Sulawesi had not had a terrorist incident since 2002. According to Iskandar, Islamic radicalism was not embraced by the vast majority of Muslims on the island, and he dismissed the notion that radical cleric and Jemmah Islamiya (JI) co-founder Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's brand of extremism had any hold in the region. Iskandar told poloff that local Indonesia National Police (INP) deployments had successfully used community policing initiatives to "empower" citizens to work with the police to reduce both religious tension and general crime.

[1](#)4. (C) Turning to the issue of police and military collaboration (a sometimes tricky matter in Indonesia), Iskandar said the INP and Indonesian military worked well together in Sulawesi, often training side by side. During

the recent gubernatorial election in South Sulawesi (Ref C), for example, the INP and military cooperated on crowd control management issues, and there were no significant problems on election day. Iskandar also noted that SD-88--the key GOI anti-terrorism task force--was stationed at his headquarters and trained as a unit in preparation for potential deployments. SD-88 was authorized to have 100 men, but only 60 were on active duty.

POSSIBLE TRANSIT ISSUES

15. (C) Possible terrorist transit routes also came up for discussion. Poloff met with the southern Sulawesi Immigration Superintendent--Brigadier General Syaiful--who told poloff that southern Sulawesi did not have problems with JI operatives, largely as a result of the area's distance from the tri-border region that Indonesia shares with Malaysia and the Philippines. His office did a lot of monitoring of the region, however. He noted that his office recently coordinated with the INP and the Australian Federal Police in the apprehension of 13 refugees from Iran and Afghanistan. They had attempted to transit through Makassar to Australia, he said. Other police officials commented that they were confident that security forces had effectively closed terrorist transit routes.

CENTRAL SULAWESI "CALM"

16. (C) The Central Sulawesi region--which has seen inter-religious violence and terrorism in the past--seemed relatively quiet. On November 7, poloff met Poso Police Chief Dr. H. Adeni Muhan. Muhan emphasized that the situation in the area was "calm" and that INP community policing efforts were helping the situation (Ref A). The INP

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had four to five police officers posted to each of the approximately 20 villages in the vicinity, and were continuously reaching out to community leaders to identify JI members stirring up trouble between Christians and Muslims. So far, the program seemed to be working well, despite some isolated complaints about police insensitivity to local cultures.

17. (C) Chief Muhan--who is not from Sulawesi--told poloff that when he arrived last March he fully expected to confront an enormous divide between the Christian and Muslim communities. (Note: SD-88 raided JI safehouses in Poso in January and communal tensions were generally believed to be very high at that time.) Contrary to his expectations, however, Muhan related that the situation was actually so peaceful that he was "bored" with life in Poso. He even joked that he wanted to be transferred back to Jakarta so that he could enhance his career.

18. (C) During poloff's November 7 conversation with INP First Inspector F. Tarigan--the de facto police chief of Tentena--Tarigan mirrored Muhan's comments about the lack of inter-religious tensions. Like other interlocutors, Tarigan told poloff that community policing efforts had paid handsome dividends. Tarigan claimed that religious conflict was "over" in the area and reported that Muslims and Christians were working to ensure no further violence took place. Tarigan blamed radical "outsiders" from both religions as the cause for past problems. Now, according to Tarigan, he devoted most of his time to stopping youth delinquency, public drunkenness and fights.

CORRUPTION A PROBLEM

19. (C) A number of interlocutors mentioned police corruption as a problem. When poloff mentioned that several NGOs had accused the INP in Poso of complicity in illegal logging operations, INP Brigadier General Badrodin Haiti, the Central Sulawesi Police Chief, replied that decentralization had created confusion about the applicability of national and

local laws. Corruption flourished in such an environment. When poloff asked about rumors that some INP in Poso provided "protection" to a new coal-fired electrical generation plant, Haiti--without answering directly--said he was working hard to end the corruption. Haiti vowed to continue efforts within the INP to create a more professional police force.

IMPROVED POLICING HELPS SITUATION

¶10. (C) During the four-day trip to Sulawesi, poloff heard repeatedly that inter-religious problems were still an issue, but that much of the tension had dissipated over time. Effective policing--including community patrols--seem to have played a very positive role in this process. Community leaders and police also both highlighted the importance of further economic development as a way of warding off future violence. For now, the GOI's strategy seems to be working, with policies in play that help to create a more livable environment in previously tense areas.

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